

Montana State Legislature

Exhibit 1

This exhibit is for Senate Bills 291 and 152. Over 250 Letters are in this exhibit. 25 have been scanned to aid in your research.

The original exhibit is on file at the Montana Historical Society and may be viewed there.

**Montana Historical Society
Archives**

225 N. Roberts

Helena MT 59620-1201

Phone (406) 444-4774

2007 Legislative Scanner Susie Hamilton

SENATE EDUCATION

EXHIBIT NO.

1

DATE.

1/29/07

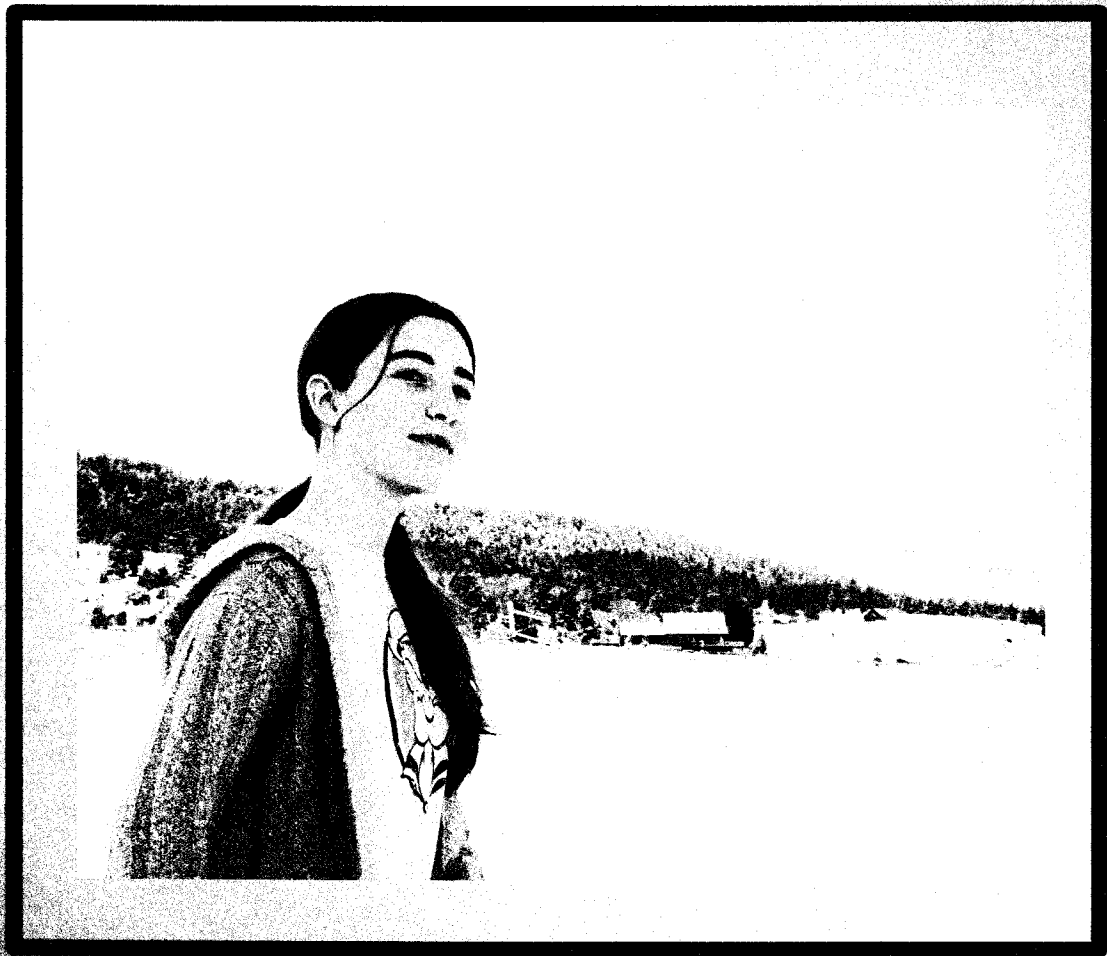
Bill NO.

SB 291

Letters of Support for SB 291



- Business - Looking to the Future





Ophir School District #72
45465 Gallatin Road, Gallatin Gateway, Mt. 59730
406-995-4281 (fax) 406-995-2161

January 17, 2007

The Honorable Don Ryan
Chairman
Education and Cultural Resources Committee
P.O. Box 200700
Helena, MT 59620-0500

Senator Ryan:

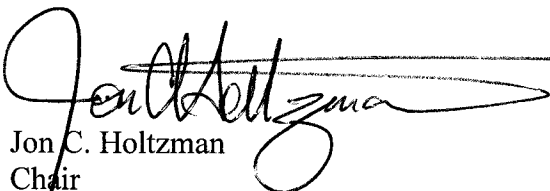
I am chair of the Ophir School Board, District #72, in Big Sky. I wanted you to know that at our regular board meeting today we passed a resolution supporting legislative action to give District #72 residents the right to vote on expanding our current K-8 district to include a high school.

We realize that this would require creating an exception to the moratorium on establishing new high school districts. It is not a given that District #72 voters would support a high school. But we believe they should have the opportunity to consider it.

In a recent survey of Big Sky parents conducted by Bozeman High School nearly 80% of respondents favored local control for a local high school. A group of parents and concerned citizens in Big Sky has been working to raise awareness of issues involved with the current eighty mile round trip commutes for students and to gather information about the potential requirements and costs of a future high school to be located here.

Should this group find general community support – and I believe they will – it would be a shame if a legislative barrier prevents local citizens from even considering such a step.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue.


Jon C. Holtzman
Chair
Ophir Board of Trustees
District # 72



January 24, 2007

To the Members of the 2007 Montana Legislature:

I am writing to express my support for SB152 and SB291 which face you during this legislative session. My name is Marne Hayes and I am writing on behalf of the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce, who supports the notion that a community should be given the right and the privilege to be able to consider and vote upon the decision to have a high school available to the community's children.

The Chamber of Commerce in Big Sky is a unique organization that proudly takes on the role of community leadership in lieu of a governing body recognized by law. Because of this, we pay special attention to issues which face our growing community and the decisions which will shape the future of the people and the families that live here. The absence of a high school in Big Sky is an issue not only for the families that live here, but also for the families that would like to potentially make Big Sky their home. We cannot expect to invite new members to our community without the option for them to be able to send their children to school within a reasonable distance of where they live. This threatens the core of what a growing community needs; families and new businesses looking for a place to call home, and expecting all of the facets of what accompany that home.

We understand that the moratorium on new school districts in the state of Montana serves a purpose and we do not ask to set precedence by receiving 'special treatment'. We only ask that you consider the issues which face our community and which are necessary to tackle if we are to succeed as a growing community. While the issues surrounding our need for a high school vary from family needs, to business issues, safety concerns, fulfillment issues, and education hurdles, we wish to support these bills on the basis of the fact that they would allow our community to have a voice and a vote in the future of their children's education. While all of these arguments have validity in their cause, we simply support that the community should be allowed to consider them of their own accord, and decide whether or not a Big Sky high school is right for us.

I appreciate that you would consider this letter of support for an issue that faces our community; it is a critical step in our future, and we feel strongly that we should have the right to vote on the direction that next critical step should go. Thank you for your consideration of supporting SB152 and SB291.

Sincerely,

Marne Hayes
Executive Director
Big Sky Chamber of Commerce
P.O. Box 160100
Big Sky, MT 59716



BIG SKY RESORT

P.O. Box 160001
Big Sky, Montana
59716

(406) 995-5000

Fax (406) 995-5001

National Reservations
(800) 548-4486

Group/Convention Sales
(800) 548-4487
Fax (406) 995-5003

BOYNE USA RESORTS

Big Sky, MT
Boyne Mountain, MI
Boyne Highlands, MI
Bay Harbor Golf Club, MI
The Inn at Bay Harbor, MI
Brighton, UT
Crystal Mountain, WA
Gatlinburg, TN
Cypress Mountain, British Columbia

January 24, 2007

To the Members of the 2007 Montana Legislature:

I am writing to express my support for SB 152 and SB 291. I have lived in Big Sky for 17 years and am the Regional Vice President of Lodging and Spa for Boyne USA Resorts/Big Sky Resort. I am also a very concerned mother of two young boys, ages 4 and 8. I am worried about the possibilities of my children traveling the Gallatin canyon everyday to attend high school in Bozeman. I am concerned about the financial stress of having to consider this option and mostly I am concerned about stress this will place on our family as we attempt to stay involved in each other's daily lives.

Growing up is hard enough, how can we continue burdening our children by taking them away from both family during the days and the friends that they try to develop relationships with in the evenings and on weekends. Further, I think our community should have more say over our child's high school and I truly do not believe that Bozeman is willing to support our growing community/high school children. I want to know the school board, vote for them, and attend school board meetings without a two-hour drive. In addition, the fact that Big Sky is currently without a high school seriously hinders us in recruiting and retaining staff members for Big Sky Resort.

In summary I think it is in the best interest of our children in Big Sky to give them the option of attending a high school where they or their parents will not have to risk their lives daily as they try to get to school and to be in an environment where they can have the daily love, support and involvement of their family as well as relationships with friends in their class.

Thank you for your consideration.

Barb Starz

Regional Vice President of Lodging and Spa
Big Sky Resort



YELLOWSTONE CLUB

Montana State Legislature
Helena, MT

Re: Creation of a High School in Big Sky, Montana

Dear State Legislators:

I am writing on behalf of the Yellowstone Club, its Members and its employees to share our support for the effort to allow the community of Big Sky the independence to be able to create its own High School.

We have been active within the Big Sky Community, since the inception of Yellowstone Club in 2000, with our support for the need to have a High School here. We have regularly raised money for the local K-8 community school, Ophir, as we appreciate how important this institution is to the long term viability and success of the Big Sky area.

Yellowstone Club has become one of the major employers in the area, and we have plans to continue to grow in that regard, and one of the regular impediments we have to finding and retaining executives and employees is the lack of a High School in the community. These important individuals to our organization have a real dilemma when they have children of High School age and often are forced to leave our employ and seek jobs in other areas that are closer to High Schools; or, these people have to either move to Bozeman, and or the children suffer a long day on the bus and often miss out on before and after school activities.

The Yellowstone Club, though its charitable organization, Dreamcatcher Endowment Inc., will pledge to support a new High School here in Big Sky with their on-going fund raising efforts.

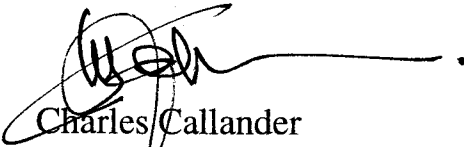
Yellowstone Club represents over 300 families, the majority of whom are second Homeowners, but a number of these families are giving serious consideration to making the move to Montana and to Big Sky on a

permanent basis because they love the area, Montana and the quality of life here. This Bill, which will provide for the potential of a High School for Big Sky, is a 'tipping point' for many of these families in their decision making.

We ask that you enthusiastically support this bill in this legislature.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Charles Callander', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Charles Callander
President

Yellowstone Club Property Owners Association and

President
Dreamcatcher Endowment Inc.



Moonlight Basin

January 26, 2007

To the Members of the
2007 Montana Legislature:

On behalf of Moonlight Basin, I am writing in strong support of SB 152 and SB 291. As a major employer in the Big Sky area, the lack of a high school has seriously impacted the community on personal and professional levels.

There are many sound reasons why a high school would benefit the Big Sky community. However, the most important reason is for the safety of our children. The dangerous and lengthy commute is mentally taxing on the students and the parents, regardless of whether the children are riding the bus or driving their own vehicles.

In addition, many potential employees have declined jobs at businesses in the Big Sky area because they find it unacceptable that their children have to commute to Bozeman to attend high school. Some people have taken jobs in the Big Sky area only to leave later when their children begin high school. It is economically draining for businesses to continuously recruit, hire, train and then lose employees.

Thank you for addressing this important community issue. I strongly urge you to pass SB 152 and SB 291 for the safety of our children and for the further development of the community.

Regards,

Lee Poole
Managing Partner

LP:cdc

COMMUNITY OFFICE

P.O. Box 1369, Pinnis, MT 59729 • 406-682-6666 • www.moonlightbasin.com



**SIMKINS
HOLDINGS, LLC**

January 25, 2007

Honorable Members of the Education Committee
Montana State Senate

RE: Senate Bill 291 Big Sky School District

Dear Committee Members:

I am writing this letter to express my strong support for Senate Bill 291, which would allow the residents of the Big Sky community to decide whether to establish their own separate high school district. This legislation is necessary to accomplish this purpose because of the current statewide moratorium on the establishment of new high school districts. My comments are based on my observations as a resident of Bozeman and a business owner who is very active in both the Bozeman and Big Sky communities. The reasons I believe that this bill should be passed are as follows.

1. The Big Sky community has grown tremendously over the last several years and truly constitutes its own separate community that is very different from Bozeman. In fact, a study that we commissioned to assess the feasibility of a grocery store in Big Sky indicated that the number of full-time residents had increased from about 1,400 as shown in the 2000 census to an estimated 3,100 in 2006. That is, the community has been growing at an estimated annual rate of about 17.5%! I also believe that all indications are that the community will continue to grow at a very high rate for the foreseeable future. Thus, even at the current number of full-time residents, Big Sky qualifies as a medium size community by Montana standards and I think should be allowed by state law to have the option to form its own separate high school district.
2. Big Sky is located about 40 to 50 miles from Bozeman and this situation forces the high school students to travel long distances over Highway 191. This section of the highway is very dangerous which has caused a number of fatal accidents and serious injuries. This commute is a bad situation that is likely to lead to tragedy as the Big Sky students and parents continue to travel this road. Some Big Sky residents have even gone so far as to buy or rent a second residence in Bozeman for weekdays in order to avoid this dangerous and time-consuming commute. Thus, forcing Big Sky students to travel to Bozeman for high school education purpose places a huge burden on the students and families from financial and time standpoints. In my opinion this is simply unfair.

3. The creation of a local high school in Big Sky also will lead to increased economic development in that area. Currently, one of the largest drawbacks for many families to live in Big Sky is the burden placed on these families by the absence of a high school there. As the recently released comprehensive economic study conducted by the state Department of Commerce indicated, Big Sky provides over 11,000 jobs and 860 million dollars of economic output for the state every year. Building a high school would likely help accelerate this boom for the Montana economy.
4. There has been some discussion of the property tax effect on Bozeman taxpayers should the Big Sky community create its own separate high school district. Some of the responses to this concern are as follows. One, the effect on the individual taxpayers will be very minor for Bozeman taxpayers. As a Bozeman resident I am not concerned about this insignificant effect on my property tax liability. Second, I do not believe that any community has the right to a subsidy from another community to lower its tax liability and I think this seems to be the crux of the property tax argument for forcing Big Sky to remain in the Bozeman high school district.

Thank you members of the Senate Education Committee for the opportunity to submit these comments on Senate Bill 291.

Sincerely,



William G. Simkins
Manager



Information Technology Associates, LLC

January 22, 2006

To the 2007 Session of the Montana State Legislature:

My name is Doug Gale and I am writing in support of SB-291 and SB-152. My spouse and I have owned property in Big Sky since 1992 and have been full time residents of Montana since 2002 when I moved my business from Columbus, Ohio to Big Sky.

That Big Sky is one of the Montana's economic engines, with more than 11,000 jobs attributable to Big Sky, is widely known. What is less well known is that Big Sky is also the home to a few high tech businesses such as mine. I run a small information technology consulting firm whose recent clients include National Lambda Rail (the fastest computer network in the United States) and Harvard University.

What does an entrepreneur like myself look for when selecting a place to live and work? Although I selected Big Sky because of its natural beauty and access to outdoor activities, there are a number of practical requirements. High speed Internet connectivity, access to a full service airport, and a first-rate school system are essential. Big Sky has the first two. While my own children are grown and the lack of a local high school was not a personal barrier, for families with school-aged children the lack of a high school is a major disincentive to living in Big Sky.

Big Sky is a thriving, growing community that has positive impact on the State's economy but it is difficult to recruit employees who have school-aged children. For me it has meant passing on opportunities that would have required me to expand my business by hiring additional people. The time has come for a local high school in Big Sky.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Doug Gale'.

Doug Gale, President

Dear Senator Ryan and members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to you as a strong supporter of Bozeman High School and a strong supporter of a Big Sky High School as well. My enthusiasm for Bozeman High is personal: I was born and raised in Bozeman and am a 1987 graduate of BHS. In addition I have strong attachments to the educational community of Bozeman, as Mother taught in Bozeman for 30 years prior to retiring and my Father continues to teach and coach after 39 years. I enjoyed my experience there, and I believe BHS offers an exemplary education.

However, I am also a small business owner in Big Sky, as well as the father of two small children who attend Ophir School. It is in this capacity that I feel most strongly about the need for a high school in Big Sky. Not having a secondary school in Big Sky hurts my business in very real and measurable ways. This is why I ask you to support Senate Bill 152.

I employ about 20 people at the Montana Real Estate Company. Since opening our doors in 2001, we have lost more than a few employees who have had to move to Bozeman when their children reach high school age. Replacing these employees and re-training the new hires costs my company an estimated \$40,000 per employee. Much of this cost is in locating new employees, as we have found that most people with older children are hesitant to take a job in Big Sky because of the lack of educational opportunity beyond eighth grade.

We also find our business suffers negative impacts from the area's lack of a high school. Many potential second-home owners, and particularly potential home owners who are considering re-locating, are hesitant to do so because there is nowhere for their children to conveniently attend high school. Since this is not the case in most other ski resort communities, this puts our Big Sky product at a disadvantage.

When you consider the recent economic report, and how much Big Sky already contributes to the economy, it seems to me that it only makes good business sense for the state to support an area which is such an important economic engine for the entire state. I appreciate your support for SB 152.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like any additional information and the community of Big Sky and I appreciate your support very much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Tim Anderson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Tim Anderson
Owner/Manager
Montana Real Estate Co. of Big Sky LLC

January 23, 2007

To the Montana Legislature:


My name is Dave House and today I write you this letter to show my support for SB 291 and 152. I moved to Big Sky the fall of 1975 to live, work and play in God's country. Currently I own, and have operated The Corral Bar, Steakhouse, and Motel since 1988. I am the father of 10 year old triplet boys currently attending Ophir elementary in Big Sky (they walk to school).

Five years from now, the thought of putting them on a school bus for an hour ride in the Gallatin Canyon, then return trip of the same after school is out, rather than five minute walk to and from school is unimaginable.

Big Sky is ready now for a High School. Our economy, as well as our children deserve this institution. The possible displacement of these kids to Bozeman or West Yellowstone (both 45 miles away) brings up the obvious. School age children should be able to attend schools in the community where they live.

Thanks you for your Support!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'David House', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David House
107-Beaver Mountain Trail
Gallatin Gateway, MT 59730
(406)-995-4801

January 28, 2007

To the Montana Legislature:

My name is Kathy Perry and I am writing this letter to express support for SB291 and 152.

My husband and I moved our family and business to Big Sky in 2005. We have three children, two of whom are currently at Ophir School, and we are greatly concerned about the safety and logistical issues of not being able to educate our children through high school here in Big Sky.

Although we feel we have found a wonderful place for our family and business to grow and thrive, we still find ourselves contemplating the possibility of another move in the next five years or the significant risk of daily travel through Gallatin canyon for either our children or my husband and myself, in order to maintain our commitment to Big Sky.

Just today there was another article in the paper about an accident involving students in the canyon. It seemed a frightening yet timely reminder of the probability of tragedy should students be forced to continue to make that trip to school in Bozeman each day.

Big Sky is currently an economic engine for the state and surely the state of Montana should support the important growth occurring here by providing appropriate services for the local citizenry.

Towards that end, please support SB291 and 152 and this important legislation for reasons of local stability and economic development as well as the safety of our children.

Most Sincerely,



Kathy Perry
PO Box 161712
Big Sky, MT 59716
406-993-2822
powderstash@3rivers.net



Ophir School District #72
45465 Gallatin Road, Gallatin Gateway, Mt. 59730
406-995-4281 (fax) 406-995-2161

January 28, 2007

To The 2007 Session of the Montana State Legislature:

This letter is in support of SB 291 and SB 152 which would give the voters of Big Sky the right to vote on establishing a high school district.

As District Clerk/Business Manager at Ophir School, I've seen the student population more than double in the last 7 years. As you know this is not a norm for Montana schools and is a valid reason that a moratorium should not apply to this community. Many of you come from towns that have high schools with fewer students than we would have at this point in time.

It is your duty to make sure that every child in this state is given the same quality access to education. By supporting this legislation you will be giving Big Sky students the educational opportunities they deserve.

Thank you for your consideration.

Tanya Roberts

Business Manager/District Clerk

**Amy & Christian Johnsen
PO Box 160847
144 Limber Pine Place
Big Sky, MT 59716**

January 28, 2007

Honorable Members of the 2007 Montana Legislature:


My wife Amy and I respectfully ask for your support on SB152 and SB291.

These bills would allow us to expand our K-8 school district into a K-12 school district. As the parents of two young girls, 4 and 7 years old, we believe that in addition to safety concerns about the bus commute to Bozeman, there are issues of self-governance to be addressed.

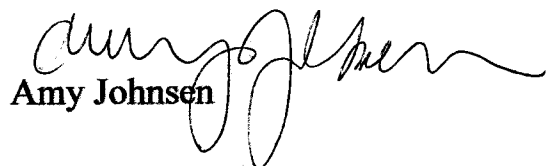
As the owner of a busy bakery & deli in a small town, we run into most folks who live here pretty often. Big Sky is still small enough that most year-round residents know or at least recognize each other at the Post Office. If this legislation goes through and we are allowed to build our own high school, we will know each of the members of that school board by name, and be familiar with how he or she operates. In our opinion, that's the way it should be.

Now some think that Big Sky is made up of a bunch of rich people looking for special privileges. There are some rich folk who live here, but Big Sky, like every other community, is built on the foundation of people who wash the sheets, bake the bread, pound the nails, sort the mail, and generally do all the basic work of making the town go. Voting for SB152 and SB291 would provide all of us who live and raise our families here in Big Sky a better quality of life for our families by keeping our kids' education local and accessible.

Thanks for listening,



Christian Johnsen



Amy Johnsen

Katherine G. Alvin
PO Box 160821
Big Sky, MT 59716
<http://www.bigskyplanning.com>



Telephone: 406.995.4601
Mobile: 406.581.3470
Fax: 406-995-3614
Email: kga@bigskyplanning.com

January 29, 2007

To the 2007 Session of the Montana State Legislature,

I am writing in support of SB 152 and 291. I am a small business owner, a mother of two young children, and have lived in Big Sky for nearly 14 years. I moved to Big Sky looking for adventure, but found a great community that I wanted to make home. My husband and I have business and social commitments to this community and do not plan on moving.

I was able to start and grow a business here, particularly because of my interest in the environmental impacts of growing communities. Now I am finding out more about the social and economic impacts. I urge you to consider more than the economic issues and to think about the safety and well-being of our children as you vote.

I also ask you to respect our desire to create a healthy, vibrant community out of Big Sky. You can see in the news that we are making great strides as environmental groups and developers work together to find positive ways to address growth in Big Sky. We're eager to work with the Bozeman High School District to solve the high school solution too. This legislation paves the way. Please vote to approve it.

Finally, please recognize the simple desire so many of us share to be close to our children during a particularly important part of their lives. The high school years provide so many great opportunities for our children to grow in independence. I want to be there with my children as they grow. I do not want to be faced with the choice of sending my child 45 miles away to do that alone, or home school and deny them that altogether. Please consider this as you vote.

Thank you for your time and your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,



Katherine G. Alvin
Owner, Big Sky Planning

Enclosures

January 26, 2007

To the Members of the 2007 Montana Legislature:

I urge you to support SB291, revising the moratorium on new high school districts. This bill will address the need of the community of Big Sky to establish a high school in their community. Although I am a resident of Bozeman and have read the threats from the Bozeman School District related to increasing my taxes should a high school in Big Sky be created, I am compelled by the arguments of the Big Sky community for such a school.

Any of us who have lived in small towns understand the importance that the schools have on the community structure and livability. Schools bring communities together in ways that other institutions cannot. As Big Sky continues to grow and develop, services must be available to provide for current and future residents. The Legislature should support communities in their desires to provide appropriate services.

Thank you for supporting SB291. It is an important step to assist Big Sky with providing a necessary community service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lauren Waterton".

Lauren Waterton

1304 S. Montana Ave
Bozeman, MT 59715

William Dean Genge
PO Box 160147
2570 Ousel Falls Road
Big Sky, MT 59716

January 25, 2007

To the 2007 Session of the Montana State Legislature:

RE: SB 291 and SB 152

I fell in love with Big Sky on New Year's Day, 1978. Since then I have visited regularly, bringing my wife and two sons to ski nearly every year. I now have a home and am involved in a number of businesses in Big Sky. My older son graduated from college in Maine last year and immediately headed for Big Sky, where he is employed and renting his own apartment. He has joined the Big Sky Fire Department. My younger son is in college in Colorado and spends his winter break and summers working and living in Big Sky. If you ask him where he's from, he'll say with pride, "Big Sky, Montana."

So, what's wrong with this picture?

1. Our businesses, which are contributing greatly to a sustainable Big Sky economy, have difficulty attracting talented young families with grade and high school aged children to come to Big Sky to work, participate in the community and make their homes.
2. My children will be forced to leave Big Sky, the place they love, when they have growing families.

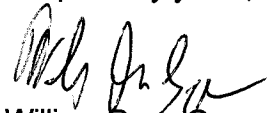
Why?

No high school.

In order to fuel a growing economy, keep families together and build the lifelong continuity that is required to make any community sustainable, Big Sky needs a high school.

Please approve SB 291 and SB 152.

Respectfully yours,



William Dean Genge

**FLAT·ROCK**
FINANCIAL Inc.

January 23, 2007

To the 2007 Session of the Montana State Legislature,

My name is Lance Child and I am writing to you in support of SB152 and SB291. I am a husband and father of two children, ages 9 and 4, and have lived in Big Sky for over 8 years. I attended all of my elementary and secondary education in Sidney, MT, and then received my Bachelors Degree from Gonzaga University. Prior to relocating to Big Sky, I had spent the previous 8 years in Seattle, WA. Upon the birth of our first child, my wife (raised in MT) and I quickly realized our desire to raise our family in the same fashion we had been raised – in a small community where families knew each other and neighbors supported one another. I'm happy to say we found this in Big Sky!

In both SB152 and SB291, the criteria for creating a high school district solely for expansion into a K-12 district are all common sense criteria that serve first and foremost the educational needs of our children across the state. Unless this legislation is enacted, families across the state will continue to be pulled apart at the time in our children's lives when they need their parents' involvement the most. Unless this legislation is enacted, our children will continue to be put in harms way, every single day of the school year, with unnecessary travels upon dangerous roads. And until this legislation is enacted, many children will go through the public education system in Montana not having the ability to fully participate in the opportunities offered them, due simply to the fact that the commute they're required to make to attend school is far too long and far too demanding of their time. All in the name of maintaining the status quo for tax bases of existing districts.

A vibrant and equitable education is the right of all Montana children. Safety and family are values I, and I believe all Montanans, hold dear. Passage of SB152 and SB291 serves these causes, and I ask you to please support these bills and vote for their passage.

Sincerely,

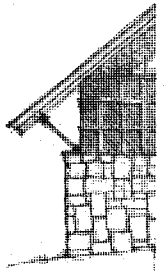
Lance Child

PO Box 160297

Big Sky, MT 59716

B R U N E L L E
A R C H I T E C T S

January 20th, 2007



To the Montana State Legislature:

My name is Michael Brunelle. I am the father of two children currently attending Ophir School, am a resident of Big Sky, and am principal of Brunelle Architects, a small firm located in Big Sky. I am urging you to support SB 291 and 152.

The lack of a high school here has the potential to stunt economic growth of our area and of Montana. Latest information from the Montana Department of Commerce shows that the Big Sky area directly or indirectly employs roughly 11,000 jobs and that total employee compensation totaled over \$283 million, which would add an estimated \$11 million in state individual income taxes. I moved to Big Sky from Livingston (and before that, Bozeman), four years ago in order to be in a growing economic environment, an environment which could support a new business like Brunelle Architects. Unfortunately many parents of Big Sky children relocate to Bozeman to send their children to high school. Many other families decide to move to other states instead of Big Sky due to the lack of a high school. This prohibits me from attracting quality, long-term employees. Montana tries to attract new small businesses. In fact, that asset is marketed in much of Montana's promotional materials. Big Sky is a ripe area for that, but its potential will not be met without an opportunity to educate children of small business owners. We earn the money *here*, let us educate our children *here*. Any other way is simply bad business for Montana.

I also urge you to support this bill to ensure the safety of Montana residents, specifically its children. The bus travels a minimum of one hour each way from Big Sky to Bozeman and back 5 days per week, needlessly placing Montana students in harm's way. Let's face it, as the growth in Big Sky gains momentum, Highway 191 gets deadlier every day. Last fall a propane truck flipped over and spilled within reach of the school bus. This alone should be a loud enough wake up call to support SB 291 and 152. Could you as legislators sleep at night if you voted not to support this effort?

The current high school status for Big Sky students needs to change. Big Sky has reached a 'critical mass', and the Montana Legislature needs to address it NOW. The bus commute on State highway 191 is extremely dangerous and long, and the lack of a high school here is bad business for Montana. Thank you for your ear and hopefully for your support.

Very Sincerely,

Michael Brunelle

January 26, 2007

Dear 2007 Session of the Montana State Legislature,

I am writing as a taxpayer, homeowner and resident of Big Sky.

The passage of Bills SB 291 and SB 152 are crucial to my husband and me.

I support the ratification of them, immediately.

We residents pay taxes and deserve an appropriate, neighborhood high school. We are happy with the development going on in Big Sky. We are finding that families want to be here. We want to be here and for a long time and have the opportunity to raise our children here. We love Big Sky and Montana. It is our home.

It is really important for us to look to our future. As I see it we are shaping the positive future of Big Sky. The land being used for new homes has helped bring prosperity to our town. We want to grow and be part of a community that is successful. One key component is the high school. We want and need it as soon as possible.

Please pass the needed legislation for us.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Whitney Brunner
Marketing Manager

THE CLUB AT SPANISH PEAKS
2055 Ousel Falls Road
PO Box 161470
Big Sky, MT 59716

P: 406.993.5456
F: 406.995.3101

Dear

As a longtime resident (and taxpayer) I am compelled to write to you. It is vitally important that you vote correctly for us about the new high school.

We need it.


Plain and simple, we elected you to 'serve' us and now we need you to vote for the passage of SB 291.

The issues are clear. There is nothing overwhelming in this plan. Only minor details and logistics to work out. There are many, many people willing to volunteer to make a high school a reality in Big Sky.

Let us work together and proceed to this positive goal, at this time. The time is right and the population more than ready.

Thank you for your time and feel free to contact me to expand on my ideas, or to help with the project.

Sincerely,

 1-26-07
BRYAN CONWAY

January 24, 2007

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE 2007 LEGISLATURE

My name is Tara Van Patten. I am writing today to show my support of SB 152 & 291.

I moved to Big Sky, MT in 2001. My husband and I work in the construction industry & primarily moved here for our business. That being said I also love the ski mountain and the other outdoor activities Gallatin County offers.

I am a mother of a 14 month old baby with my second on the way. I would like to see a high school in Big Sky not only for my children but for the sake of all children in our community.

I am personal friends with a couple of children who live locally and currently attend Bozeman High & commute by bus every school day. I am concerned with their safety. I also feel these boys are missing out on vital social & academic learning. High school commuters can not take as many classes as they could if they did not have the commute. High school commuters can not easily attend school social functions, school sporting events or even meet with Bozeman classmates after school.

We all know about the dangers of HWY 191. It is unbelievable to me that parents are forced to let their children travel through the canyon twice a day.

We need to build a community here; a community that nurtures growth.

I would like to see more families move to the area and stay; families that will live and work here.

I think it should also be noted the effect on the environment this mass commuting is making. Living and working locally would greatly reduce the amount of energy consumption this area is expending.

These are just a few of my concerns and reasons why I support SB 152 & 291.

Thank you for addressing our concerns on safety, community & economic development in the Big Sky area.

Sincerely,



Tara Van Patten
212 Silver Run Rd.
PO Box 161632
Big Sky, MT 59716

TARA VAN PATTEN PO BOX 161632 BIG SKY, MT 59716

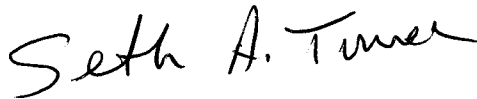
To the 2007 Montana State Legislature:

My name is Seth Turner and I am writing to express my support for SB291 and 152. I have lived in Big Sky for about ten years and have been a Big Sky business owner for three years and home owner for a year and a half. I have a lot invested in Big Sky and I am concerned with issues of family unity and safety as a result of not having a high school here in Big Sky.

As my business continues to grow and I spend more time living in my home here in Big Sky I realize that I will most likely be raising a family here in Big Sky and as I think about this I am faced with the growing concern of whether or not I will have to choose between my business in Big Sky and the best interest of my family if there isn't a high school in town. I have been in Big Sky for some really horrible accidents that have occurred in the canyon and I would not put my kids on a bus through that canyon twice a day. So what's my other option as a home owner and business owner?

I ask that you please support this very important legislation for reasons of safety, economic growth, and family unity, for the family that I hope to raise here in beautiful Big Sky.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Seth A. Turner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Seth Turner
P.O. Box 161848
Big Sky, MT 59716
406-581-4667
seth@blacktieskis.com
dutchman622@hotmail.com

January 25th 2007

To the Members of the 2007 Montana Legislature:

My name is Jacquie Rager, I am in support for SB 152 and 291: and I am writing to express my support for SB 152 and SB291.

As a full time resident of 7 years in Big Sky and a business owner and Mother of two it is imperative that we have a high school in Big Sky.

Besides the obvious concerns we have as parents about the safety of the canon for our children, families and friends. We need the High school to help us create a community. An example, since the daycare was forced to close many locals have needed to leave the area & many more leave each year for the same reasons due to not having a high school in Big Sky. This not only weakens our community but our kids loose their friends , so far in their short lives Alex who is two, has lost two of his friends that he plays with & Madison three, by the age of four & this count will keep increasing.

I have even had clients make the comments to me that they would love to move out here full time but will not as there is not a high school, so they will wait another 6 years before they move out, if they do at all, SO another house in Big Sky that will sit empty except for 2 weeks of the year.

As a business owner, to find good, mature staff is an ongoing battle, & will never change until we have a real community. My days of operating a very successful business in Big Sky & helping the community will also be numbered, with two kids & traveling to Bozeman or living in Bozeman or even possibly moving out of the area to the East Coast will be necessary to ensure that my kids have a nurturing & supportive environment for their high school years. This would be prevented with a high school in Big sky.

The canyon well that as I said before is obvious the increased concerns of safety – BUT what do you do when you work & live in Big Sky & the canyon is closed for sometimes up to 10 hours or more & your kids are stuck on the other side, or let alone be in the accident. With one accident we could wipe out a whole family or if it is the bus a whole community of kids.

Thank you for supporting SB152 and 291.

Sincerely:



Jacquie Rager
PO BOX 160072
Big Sky MT 59716.

Main Identity

From: "Patricia Dolan" <pdd@voyagerlp.com>
To: <browley@3rivers.net>
Sent: Thursday, January 25, 2007 3:55 PM
Subject: Big Sky high school - bills in legislature

January 25, 2007

Dear Members of the 2007 Legislature:

I am writing as a Montana taxpayer (and an owner/developer of land in Big Sky).

The passage of bills SB291 and SB152 are critical to our entire community. I strongly endorse the enactment of them, immediately.

The reasons are many and you are likely aware of them. However what weighs heaviest for the community of Big Sky is that having our own high school will allow the families of Big Sky to remain living and working in the area. This is their home. After residents' children have successfully attended Ophir School each faces a major dilemma. They want to stay in Big Sky, but they do not want their children to commute to school on Highway 191. It is real. It is serious.

You hold the solution in the legislature. Please act to pass SB291 and SB152.

Big Sky residents pay taxes and deserve a proper, local high school. The on-going growth in Big Sky is good for the community, good for the county and good for Montana. People want to live here. They want to raise their families here; they want to retire here. Montana offers unspoiled natural beauty and friendly people. Residents want and deserve a community, and the schools that make it a neighborhood.

Thank you for debating and evaluating this issue of tremendous significance to everyone in Big Sky. As you weigh the pros and cons I am confident you will agree that the best solution for our area is our own school district. Your action on the passage above-mentioned bills is important.

Sincerely,



Patricia Dolan

28 Obsidian Road

Big Sky, MT 59716

1/25/2007